



Story and photo  
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**T**he squadron and seven of its aircraft were deployed, giving the “stay back” crew some time to spruce up the spaces. It was a nice, cool day, but heavy rain from the day before had leaked onto the freshly painted hangar-bay floor. Because leaks were a common occurrence, no one really noticed the hazard they caused—until we started moving the lockers and furniture back into our spaces.

The job went well at first. Later, I noticed a shipmate was having a hard time putting a locker full of publications on a dolly and decided to help him. Unfortunately, neither of us realized we were standing in a puddle of water. As the shipmate started forward, he lost his footing, and the locker immediately began to roll. Within a fraction of a second, it fell back and trapped him under it. He lay there, yelling in pain, as I summoned help from other shipmates who helped me lift the locker off the trapped Sailor.

A corpsman arrived and quickly rushed the injured shipmate to a nearby base clinic, where a doctor treated him for a hyper-extended knee

ligament. He was on crutches for a few weeks.

As this incident showed, a seemingly benign situation quickly can turn ugly. Taking the time to prepare for moving the lockers would have minimized risk potential. We should have swept or mopped the water from the hangar-bay floor and let it dry. We also should have emptied the locker before trying to move it. However, we instead got lax and let expediency override a thorough assessment of the hazards and risks related to a seemingly simple task.

As a general rule, learn to ask these questions when tasked with any assignment:

- What can go wrong?
- What can be done to eliminate or reduce potential hazards?
- Is the completion timeline reasonable?
- If something goes wrong, how will the subsequent article read in *Ashore* or one of the other Naval Safety Center publications?

Know the answers to these questions before you start a task, and you won’t be like the victim in this story—still undergoing physical therapy to regain normal motions in his knee two months after the mishap. ■